

HOW TO RECOGNIZE GIANT HOGWEED

- at nine to 14 feet high, it's perhaps one of the tallest herbaceous plants in Massachusetts;
- stems are 2–4 inches in diameter, hollow and ridged, with purple blotches and coarse hairs;
- leaves are sharply and unevenly lobed, approaching five feet long;
- flowering occurs from mid-June to mid-July; flower clusters may reach 2½ feet across;
- in winter, dead stems may remain upright, providing an easy means of recognition.

IT'S A TALL, MAJESTIC PLANT, BUT— DON'T TOUCH IT! DON'T PLANT IT!

Giant Hogweed is a public health hazard because of its potential to cause severe skin irritation. When susceptible people contact its sap and are exposed to sunlight, they develop painful, burning blisters that could eventually turn into purplish or brownish pigmentation and scarring.

Common Sense Methods of Dealing with Giant Hogweed

- DON'T** touch or handle plants using your bare hands!
- DON'T** allow children to play in hogweed. They may sometimes use the long, hollow stems for telescopes or peashooters.
- DON'T** transplant Giant Hogweed, plant its seeds or give away plants or seeds.
- DO** wash immediately with soap and water if hogweed sap contacts your skin.
- DO** report locations of any Giant Hogweed plants, using the HOGWEED HOTLINE number **617 626-1779**; or you can report them online (*see back panel*).



Dead Stems

After producing seeds in late summer, the plants die, leaving stems standing into winter. At this point seeds have been shed to germinate the following spring or in future years.

GROWTH STAGES



Seedling

Seeds germinate from early spring throughout the growing season, after exposure to winter temperatures. Seedlings initiate the vegetative rosette pattern of growth the first season, then...



Juvenile Plant

... Leaf clusters sprout from overwintering roots each year for 2–5 years until the plant flowers.



Flowering Stems

Plants bolt and flower in mid-summer after rosette plants accumulate enough energy reserves (from 2–5 years).

ABOUT GIANT HOGWEED

Native to Eurasia, Giant Hogweed, a member of the carrot or parsley family, was cultivated in North America as early as 1917. Its tall, majestic appearance was probably responsible for its use in landscape settings, both in North America and Europe. Since its introduction into North America, this plant has become established in rich moist soils along roadsides, stream banks and waste ground. In the eastern US, it is known to occur in Maine, New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and now Massachusetts.

Giant Hogweed is both a Federal and Massachusetts Noxious Weed, making it unlawful to propagate, sell or transport this plant in the Commonwealth. Currently, the US Department of Agriculture and the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture are surveying for and eradicating this weed.

We need your help in locating new sites of Giant Hogweed in Massachusetts. Stands of Giant Hogweed may range from a few plants to almost half an acre, but seedlings and early growth stages are easily overlooked. If you see this weed, please report its occurrence by calling the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture's Giant Hogweed Hotline: **617 626-1779**.

Information will be taken upon receipt of your call, or you will be contacted within a few days.



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SKIN REACTION TO GIANT HOGWEED SAP



Close-up of stem of Giant Hogweed: stem is not smooth but is ridged with purple blotches and coarse hairs

Giant Hogweed is commonly confused with other species; a comparison chart and more information is available on our website at:

www.mass.gov/dfa/pestalert/giant_hogweed.htm

You can also report the occurrence of Giant Hogweed plants online from this page.

Front panel and inside photo of flowering stems by Terry English, USDA; inside photos of seedlings and juvenile plants, above photos of skin reactions by Pennsylvania Dept. of Agriculture.

Giant Hogweed

Heracleum mantegazzianum

**An attractive but
dangerous noxious weed.**

Have you seen this plant?

